

# **7 FAM 150 EMERGENCY AND DISASTER SITUATIONS**

*(TL:CON-1 4-15-83)*

## **7 FAM 151 PREPLANNING**

In a major calamity, such as a natural disaster or sizable terrorist incident, the entire post will become immersed in dealing with the immediate crisis. The resources of the consular section may be particularly tasked. Such a situation will come without warning and the post must have plans developed and approved in advance so as to respond effectively to such crises. The post's Emergency and Evacuation (E & E) Plan establishes procedures to follow in most crisis situations, including those circumstances that could involve a large number of U.S. citizens. Also, the post's Hijack Contingency Plan deal with terrorist incidents in detail. Consular employees must be aware of their individual responsibilities in implementing these plans, and the consular section should play a major role in their development. Such plans should be transmitted to the Department to enable it to assist the post in coping with crises.

## **7 FAM 152 REPORTING**

Posts must telegraph by NIACT IMMEDIATE, or, if appropriate, FLASH, or telephone the Department about a disaster or crisis situation that may involve U.S. citizens (the telephone number of the Department's Operations Center is (202) 632-1512). This initial report should state whether any U.S. citizens are known to have been hurt or killed, as well as the source of that information, even if just rumor (see 7 FAM 152 Exhibit 152 ). The initial report alerts it to make the necessary arrangements, such as establishing a task force to deal with the domestic aspects of the situation. The post should continue to provide periodic status reports as well as spot reports on significant developments. It is especially important to report, as soon as known, the names of any U.S. citizens involved. This information should be actively sought from the local authorities. The post must not wait until the names are released to the press, because the post and the Department have a responsibility to convey to the relatives of the involved U.S. citizens current information on their well being.

Since a catastrophe abroad will be extensively and immediately reported in the American new media, many U.S. citizens with a friend or relative anywhere near the disaster will make inquiries of either the Department or their Congressional representatives.

The Department will screen inquiries and telegraph the post once a day a list of U.S. citizens in the affected country who are believed by interested persons in the United States to be involved. If the Department has received a list of U.S. citizens involved, it can reassure callers who have no reason for concern. Names sent to the post by the Department must be given priority handling. The post should make a quick review, and report the results to the Department (CA/OCS/EMR). Continued monitoring may be needed if the initial check was negative.

## **7 FAM 153 PRIVACY ACT REQUIREMENTS**

During hijackings, kidnappings, and other disasters involving U.S. citizens, the Department passes unclassified information concerning an individual to the immediate family without Privacy Act consent. Section 3 of the Privacy Act of 1974 amends the U.S. Code, section 552(b) (8), authorizing Federal agencies to divulge information about an individual without prior consent in instances of "compelling circumstances affecting the health and safety" of an individual. Consular officers cannot provide information about involved U.S. citizens to friends or the media. They can explain the Department's action in such cases and say that they are monitoring the situation. The Department (CA/OCS/EMR) should be notified immediately if the names of involved U.S. citizens are likely to appear in the media.

## **7 FAM 154 THROUGH 159 UNASSIGNED**

# 7 FAM 152 Exhibit 152

## Sample of Post Telegram Reporting on Crisis Situation

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<b>TELEGRAM</b>		INDICATE CLASS. TAG CHARGE 101
FROM: <u>AmEmbassy Managua</u>		CLASSIFICATION: <u>UNCLASSIFIED</u>
E.O. 12356	TO: <u>N/A</u>	7
TAGS:	<u>CAFC and Country Symbol</u>	
SUBJECT:	<u>W/P: Earthquake in Matagalpa</u>	
ACTION:	<u>SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE</u>	
 <u>UNCLAS MANAGUA</u>		
Earthquake measuring 6.7 on Richter scale struck at 1843 hours. Center believed to be near town of Matagalpa. Preliminary reports indicate 13 killed, 17 injured. No repeat no Americans believed to be among dead or injured. Property damage extensive. Consul Jones en route to Matagalpa to determine extent and nature of loss to local American community of approximately 100 persons. Will report further details ASAP.		
SMITH		
DRAFTED BY:	DRAFTING DATE	TEL. NO.
<u>P. M. Kelly</u>	<u>2/15/83</u>	<u>23857</u>
CLEARANCES:	CONTENTS AND CLASSIFICATION APPROVED BY:	
	<u>T. J. McNeil</u>	
UNCLASSIFIED		
CLASSIFICATION		
50153-101	OPTIONAL FORM 100 FEBRUARY 1978 JANUARY 1978 Dept. of State	

